

Message Text

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46

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 SAJ-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 /054 W

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O 162103Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9150

C O N F I D E N T I A L OTTAWA 1078

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, CA

SUBJECT: DRURY SCANDAL: OUELLET RESIGNS IN SURPRISE MOVE

REF: OTTAWA 1063

1. IN STUNNING MOVE AT BEGINNING OF COMMONS QUESTION PERIOD MARCH 16, MIN CONSUMER AND CORPORATE AFFAIRS ANDRE OUELLET ANNOUNCED RESIGNATION WHICH HE SAID WAS ACCEPTED BY TRUDEAU THAT MORNING. OUELLET ANNOUNCED THIS IN AGGRESSIVE STATEMENT REFERRING TO OPPOSITION PARTISAN POLITICAL ATTACKS WHICH "UNDERMINING" HIS WORK AS MINISTER AND CREATING UNFORTUNATE ATMOSPHERE FOR HIS CONTEMPT APPEAL. DESPITE OPPOSITION INSISTENCE THAT DRURY SHOULD NOW ALSO RESIGN, DRURY STATED HE HAD NO INTENTION OF DOING SO.

2. EMBASSY COMMENT: EMBASSY SURPRISED BY OUELLET RESIGNATION AS WAS APPARENTLY THE OPPOSITION. AS NOTED REFTTEL OPPOSITION WAS TARGETING OUELLET BUT THER NO INDICATION THEY EXPECTED PAYDIRT THIS QUICKLY. SPECULATION NOW ON REASONS FOR PRECIPITOUS OUELLET RESIGNATION OF QUESTION-ABLE UTILITY SINCE THOSE FEW WHO PRESUMABLY KNOW ACTUAL REASONS OBVIOUSLY AREN'T LIKELY TO PUBLICIZE THEM. MOVE ITSELF IS, HOWEVER, SIGNIFICANT SINCE OUELLET IS A CONFIDANT OF TRUDEAU'S AND IS A YOUNG FAVORITE OF THE QUEBEC LIBERAL CAUCUS. DECSION, THUS, NOT MADE LIGHTLY. THIS
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DRAMATIC TURN COULD, MOREOVER, REGISTER WITH ELECTORATE WHICH UNTIL

NOW MAY HAVE HAD NO INTEREST IN ENTIRE AFFAIR (REFTEL). WHATEVER
LENGTH OF TIME TO NEXT NATIONAL ELECTIONS, RESIGNATION OF
MINISTER IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES WILL HAVE SOME EFFECT ON
VOTERS.
JOHNSON

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NNN

Message Attributes

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